

Goose Branch (1255A) Recreational Use Attainability Analysis Summary and Recommendation

A recreational use-attainability analysis (RUAA) was conducted on Goose Branch (1255A) in the summer of 2009 to determine the appropriate recreational use and numeric criteria. Goose Branch is an unclassified intermittent with pools water body in north central Texas, approximately 7 miles in length. It is currently listed on the 2014 Texas Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List of Impaired Water Bodies due to elevated bacteria levels. It was initially listed in 2002.

The RUAA identified that the presumed use of primary contact recreation (PCR) for Goose Branch should be revised to secondary contact recreation 2 (SCR 2). SCR applies to water bodies where water recreation can occur, but the nature of the recreation does not involve a significant risk of ingestion. SCR 2 applies to water bodies where water recreation activities do not involve a significant risk of ingestion and where activities occur less frequently than for secondary contact recreation 1 due to physical characteristics of the water body or limited public access.

During the field surveys, field staff did not observe any type of recreation occurring on the stream, nor did they find any evidence of recreation. Interviews of individuals familiar with the stream did not report PCR or SCR as a use, and indicated the flow regime is ephemeral. Physical characteristics of the stream include an average thalweg of 0.01 meters (0.39 in), no pools greater than one meter deep, and no flow. Public access is very limited. There is one bridge crossing and the stream flows predominately through private lands.

Naturally low water levels and limited accessibility decrease the likelihood of PCR. Goose Branch is extremely shallow and has very little public access, supporting reclassification to SCR 2. In accordance with §307.4 (j)(3)(C) of the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards, the TCEQ recommends a reclassification from PCR to SCR 2 with the corresponding geometric mean of 1030 colonies *E. coli*/100mL for all of Goose Branch, from its confluence with the South Fork of the North Bosque River 2.5 miles (4.0 km) west of Stephenville, upstream to the headwaters 0.5 miles (0.8 km) north of FM 8 in Erath County. This reclassification is appropriate due to “natural, ephemeral, intermittent low flow conditions or water levels” in accordance with reasons specified in 40 CFR §131.10(g)(2).

Prior to changing the currently assigned recreational use of Goose Branch in the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards, the TCEQ would provide additional public notice and opportunity for public comment. In addition, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency would review this proposed change under the provisions of the federal Clean Water Act.